

Tennessee



Forest Health Highlights 2008

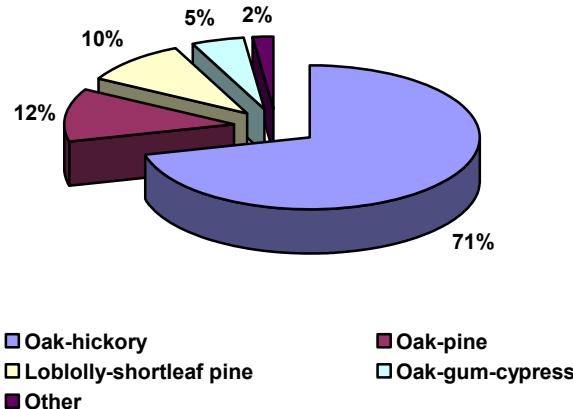
The Resource

Tennessee's forests cover 14.4 million acres, more than half of the state's land area. The majority of the state's forested land, some 8.7 million acres, is in non-industrial private ownership, while approximately 556,000 acres are in national forest. Tennessee's forests are prized for their scenic beauty, supporting tourism and outdoor recreation and providing wildlife habitat from the Appalachian Mountains in the east to the Mississippi Valley in the west. The major forest type in the state is oak-hickory comprising 71% of the forested acres. Other major types include loblolly-shortleaf pine, and mixed oak-pine comprising 22%. Oak-gum-cypress and other species comprise just 7% of the state's forests.



Chris Evans, River to River CWMA, Bugwood.org

Tennessee Forest Type Distribution



Forest Influences and Programs

Southern pine beetle (SPB) is Tennessee's most significant forest insect pest. In 2008, SPB activity remained at very low levels, with no counties in outbreak status. Only Bradley County in East Tennessee had any SPB activity. The state conducts pheromone surveys during the early spring to predict SPB activity for the remainder of the year. The state offers cost-share incentives to landowners to perform restoration work and thinning as part of the SPB Prevention Program.

Hemlock wooly adelgid is now established in East Tennessee and is spreading toward Middle Tennessee. This small introduced insect has begun to devastate the state's hemlock resource with extensive mortality in East Tennessee. HWA now infests 27 out of the 40 counties in Tennessee with native hemlock stands. Biological control efforts using several species of predator beetles on federal and state lands have been occurring for at least four years.



Gypsy moth is a threat to Tennessee's hardwood-dominated forests. The state works closely with USDA APHIS-PPQ and the Forest Service to monitor and quickly identify any accidental introductions of the moth; there have been several successful eradication projects covering as much as 40,000 acres in recent years. In 2008, delimiting and mass trapping efforts were conducted in two locations in Cumberland, and Claiborne Counties, the last being the largest current infestation. No moths were trapped in these infested areas and extensive survey efforts will only be conducted Claiborne County during 2009. On the other hand, another infestation was detected in Bradley County in East Tennessee by delimiting trapping and egg mass surveying.

Oak decline impacts timber and recreation resources in Tennessee. It results in dieback and mortality of large, mature oaks. A complex of factors such as drought, frost, insect defoliation, and secondary agents including root and canker diseases and wood boring insects contribute to the condition. Forest surveys indicate that nearly 9% (738,000 acres) of oak forest is susceptible. Oak decline was on the rise during 2008 due to several consecutive years of drought as seen by the increases in incidents of hypoxylon canker and oak crown dieback and mortality. Oak decline may continue during 2009 even if drought conditions end.

Storm damage was big news in Tennessee in 2008. On February 5-6, 2008, tornados ripped through Middle and West Tennessee taking lives and destroying property, including forestland. Aerial and ground surveys indicated that over 8,200 acres of forestland within 13 counties were significantly impacted.



Emerald ash borer surveys were initiated in 2005 and continued through 2008 under the National Survey Program. USDA APHIS-PPQ and the Tennessee Department of Agriculture are the major survey participants in Tennessee. The survey employs panel traps with lure installed on ash trees in and around campgrounds in Middle Tennessee as well as selected sites in West and East Tennessee. Firewood publicity blitzes have also been conducted near Bristol during significant NASCAR events to educate the public about the potential hazards of moving potentially pest infested firewood from one part of the country to another. As of December 2008, no EAB infestations have been detected in Tennessee.

Forest Health Assistance in Tennessee

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